

# ***NEWS RELEASE***

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***OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY  
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA  
San Diego, California***

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***For Immediate Release***

**NEWS RELEASE SUMMARY** - September 17, 2007

United States Attorney Karen P. Hewitt announced that Darin Luis Ayala was sentenced today in U.S. District Court in San Diego by United States District Judge Larry Alan Burns to serve 60 months in custody, followed by five years of supervised release, following Ayala's conviction for possession with intent to distribute approximately 364.60 kilograms (802.60 pounds) of marijuana.

According to Assistant U.S. Attorney Andrew G. Schopler, who prosecuted the case, the charges arose from Border Patrol surveillance of the Buttercup Campground area in the Imperial Sand Dunes on December 2, 2006. Evidence presented at court hearings established that at about 10:00 a.m. on that date, a Border Patrol agent observed Ayala leaving Buttercup Campground, driving a white 2000 Chevrolet 2500 pickup truck and towing an open flatbed trailer. The agent immediately observed a space discrepancy in the flatbed trailer which caused him to follow Ayala for several miles. When Ayala was eventually stopped near

the intersection of Interstate 8 and Highway 98, a narcotic detector dog alerted to the trailer. The agents then unscrewed the sheet-metal panels on the floorboard of the front area of the flatbed trailer, revealing a large, concealed compartment that contained 50 cellophane-wrapped packages, containing an aggregate of about 364.60 kilograms (802.60 pounds) of marijuana.

**DEFENDANT**

**Criminal Case Number: 06CR2620-LAB**

Darin Luis Ayala

**SUMMARY OF CHARGES**

Title 21, United States Code, Section 841(a)(1)—Possession with Intent to Distribute Marijuana.

**AGENCIES**

U.S. Border Patrol

U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration